

**Remarks**

Claims 1-9 are currently pending.

Claims 1-9 are currently rejected.

**35 U.S.C. § 103**

The Examiner rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lehman et al. (US 5,973,147) in view of Kitamura et al. (US 3,716,330). Applicants traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Lehman et al. discloses a process for dyeing a fibre material by using at least two fibre reactive dyes. Lehman et al. mentions an after-treatment at a pH of 8-9 and temperature of 75°-85°C but does not disclose or suggest using a reducing agent in such an after-treatment step.

Kitamura et al. teaches a process of melting a coating consisting of a dye and a low-melting polymer onto fibre material. The coated fibre material is then heated to cause penetration of the dye into the fibers. The coating is then removed from the fibre material by water or an organic solvent which also may contain an alkaline substance, reducing agent or dispersing agent. One of ordinary skill in the art would have no reason to combine the after-treatment step taught in Kitamura et al. with the process of Lehman et al. since there is no organic coating to be removed in either the process of Lehman et al. or the presently claimed invention.

The Examiner also rejected claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lehman et al. in view of Benz et al. (US 3,170,911) or Grimmel et al. (US 3,445,451). Applicants traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

For the reasons set forth above, Lehman et al. does not teach or suggest the presently claimed invention.

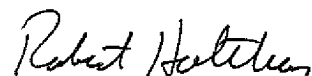
Benz et al. discloses the use of reactive dyestuffs for dyeing, padding and printing textile fiber material. The Examiner refers to column 3, line 15 to column 4, line 6 in Benz et al. as disclosing the after-treatment of such dyed textile fiber material with hydrosulfite. However, what Benz et al. discloses is an after-treatment step in which hydrosulfite is used as part of a discharge paste. Discharge refers to the destruction of a dyeing; thus, the discharge paste in the after-treatment step in Benz et al.'s process causes the bond between the dye and fiber to break thereby destroying the dyeing. Similarly, Grimmel et al. teaches the use of a reducing agent, such as sodium hydrosulfite, to remove dye from the fibers and "thereby leaving a completely white background." *See US 3,445,451* at col. 2, lines 22-25. One of ordinary skill in the art, when confronted with the problem of improving fastness properties of dyed materials, would not take into consideration an after-treatment step which destroys coloration of the dyed material. Accordingly, the skilled artisan would not combine the process of Lehman et al. with the after-treatment steps taught in Grimmel et al. or Benz et al., and Applicants respectfully request the rejections under 103(a) be withdrawn and the issuance of a Notice of Allowance toward the pending claims.

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Respectfully Submitted,



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